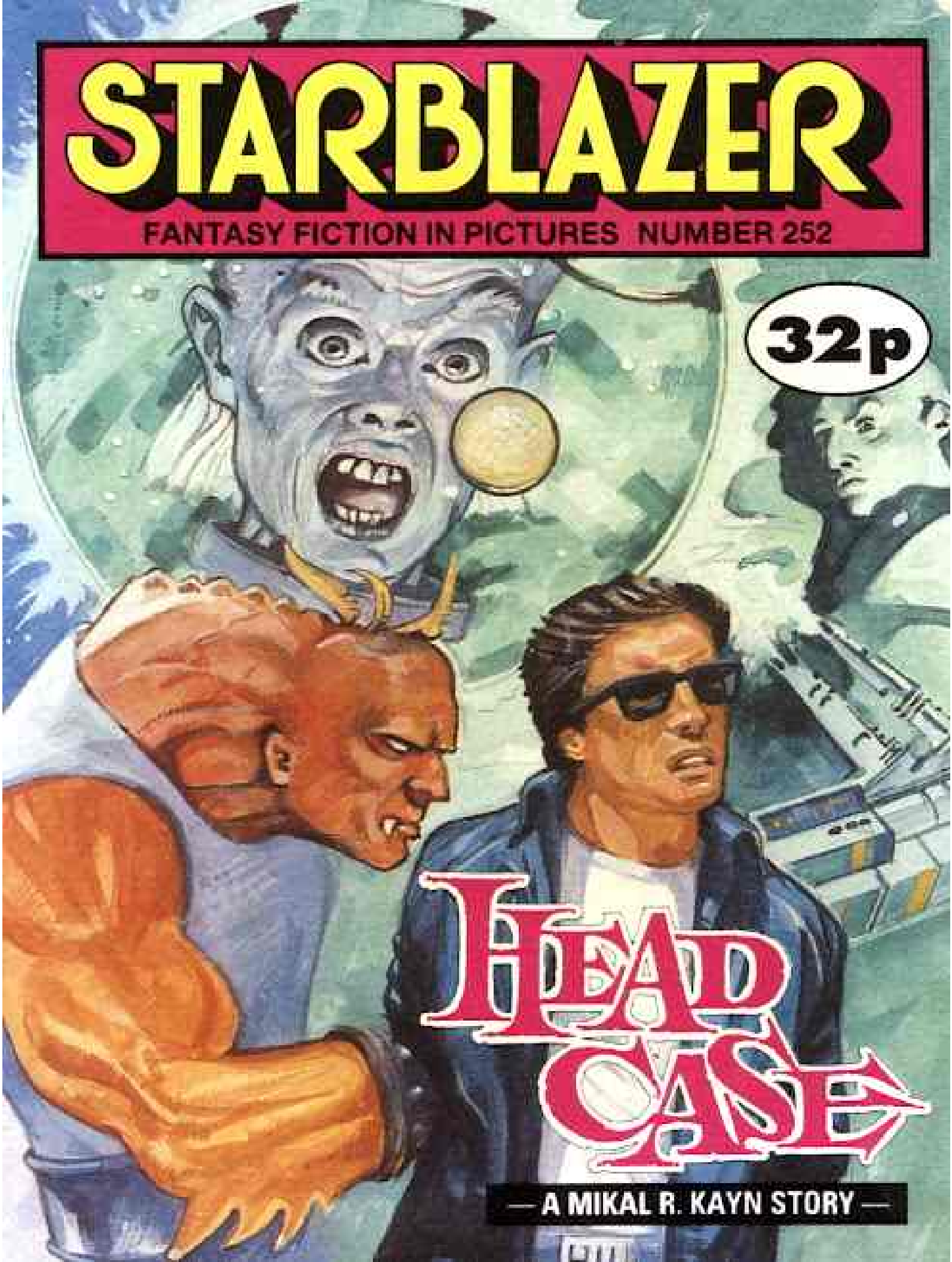
STARBLAZER

FANTASY FICTION IN PICTURES NUMBER 252

32p



HEAD CASE

— A MIKAL R. KAYN STORY —

We at "Starblazer" want to bring you the very best in Fantasy Fiction. To do that we need *your* help.

So that we can produce the kind of stories you want to read, please fill in the questionnaire on this page and send it to "Starblazer", D. C. Thomson & Co. Ltd., 185 Fleet Street, London EC4A 2HS.

If you don't want to cut your issue of "Starblazer", you can copy the questionnaire onto a sheet of paper.

And there's a chance to win a full-colour print of one of our new-style wraparound covers!

The senders of the ten letters which we judge to be the most informative will each receive one of the prints. We want to hear from you NOW!

Name ..... **Age** .....

Address .....

What kind of science fiction do you most enjoy? Please tick appropriate boxes. If you dislike any type of story, place a cross in the box.

SUPERHEROES	☐	☐	**FANTASY**
DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS	☐	☐	**SWORD AND SORCERY**
POST HOLOCAUST	☐	☐	**HORROR**
ADVENTURE	☐	☐	**STAR WARS**
HUMOUR	☐	☐	**DR. WHO**
			MYSTERY

Where do you normally buy your STARBLAZER? _____

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Which is your favourite STARBLAZER story? _____

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Which is your favourite character? _____

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_____

Have you any comments to make about STARBLAZER. . . good or bad? _____

_____

HEAD CASE

THE NAME IS MIKAL R. KAYN, AN AGENT OF UNITED WORLDS POLICE UNTIL AN EXPLOSION RESTRICTED MY VISION TO INFRA-RED WITHOUT THE AID OF SPECIAL LENSES. NOW A SHORT-OF-WORK PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR STARTING ANOTHER NEW DAY IN DOWNTOWN NEW MOSCOW — AND PERSUADED TO ACT LIKE A PUBLIC SPIRITED CITIZEN ON SEEING TWO LOUTS BEATING UP AN ELDERLY VICTIM IN FULL VIEW OF SUNDRY UNCARING MEMBERS OF THE POPULACE.

I WADED IN — AND ALL THREE JUST VANISHED.

HUH! WHAT THE . . ?

A BRAVE INTERVENTION — YET HOW FORTUNATE FOR HIM THAT THE ASSAULT WAS MERELY A HOLOGRAM PROJECTION. ALAS, MY FRIENDS, SUCH VIOLENCE IS ONLY TOO REAL IN THIS LAWLESS AGE . . .

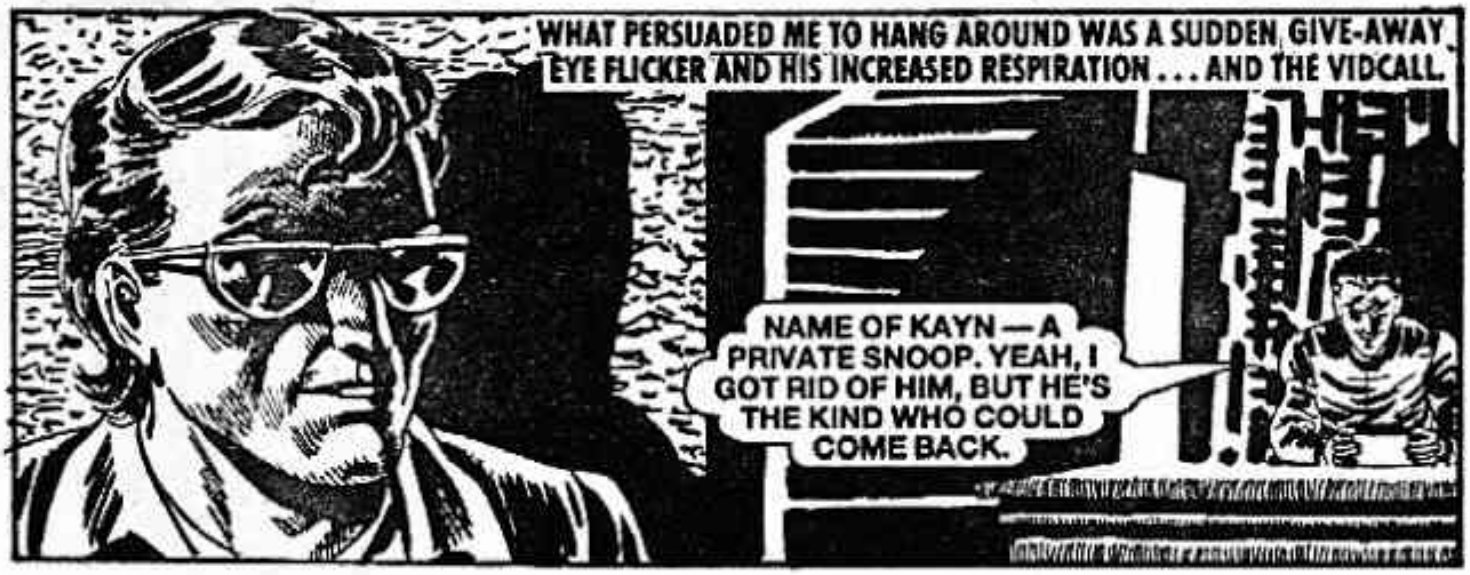
HOW COULD I FORGET IT WAS ELECTION YEAR? I HAD BEEN TAKEN IN BY A CAMPAIGN TRICK.

THE NAME'S BIRT STRUM, FOLKS. YOU KNOW ME AND MY RECORD ON LAW AND ORDER. A VOTE FOR ME AS PREFECT OF THE COUNCIL IS A VOTE FOR ONE WHO CARES . . .

I GOT ON WITH THE DAILY GRIND — WHICH THAT DAY INVOLVED TRACKING DOWN A DEFAULTING COMPANY CLERK . . .

NEVER SEEN THE GUY BEFORE.

TOO BAD! GET IN TOUCH WITH ME IF YOU DO.



SCARE A SCARED MAN JUST THAT LITTLE BIT MORE AND HE USUALLY RUNS.
ALTON DROON! LET US HAVE NO TROUBLE. JUST HAND OVER THAT BUNDLE OF NEGOTIABLE CREDITS AND YOU CAN BE ON YOUR WAY.
HUH! WHAT?

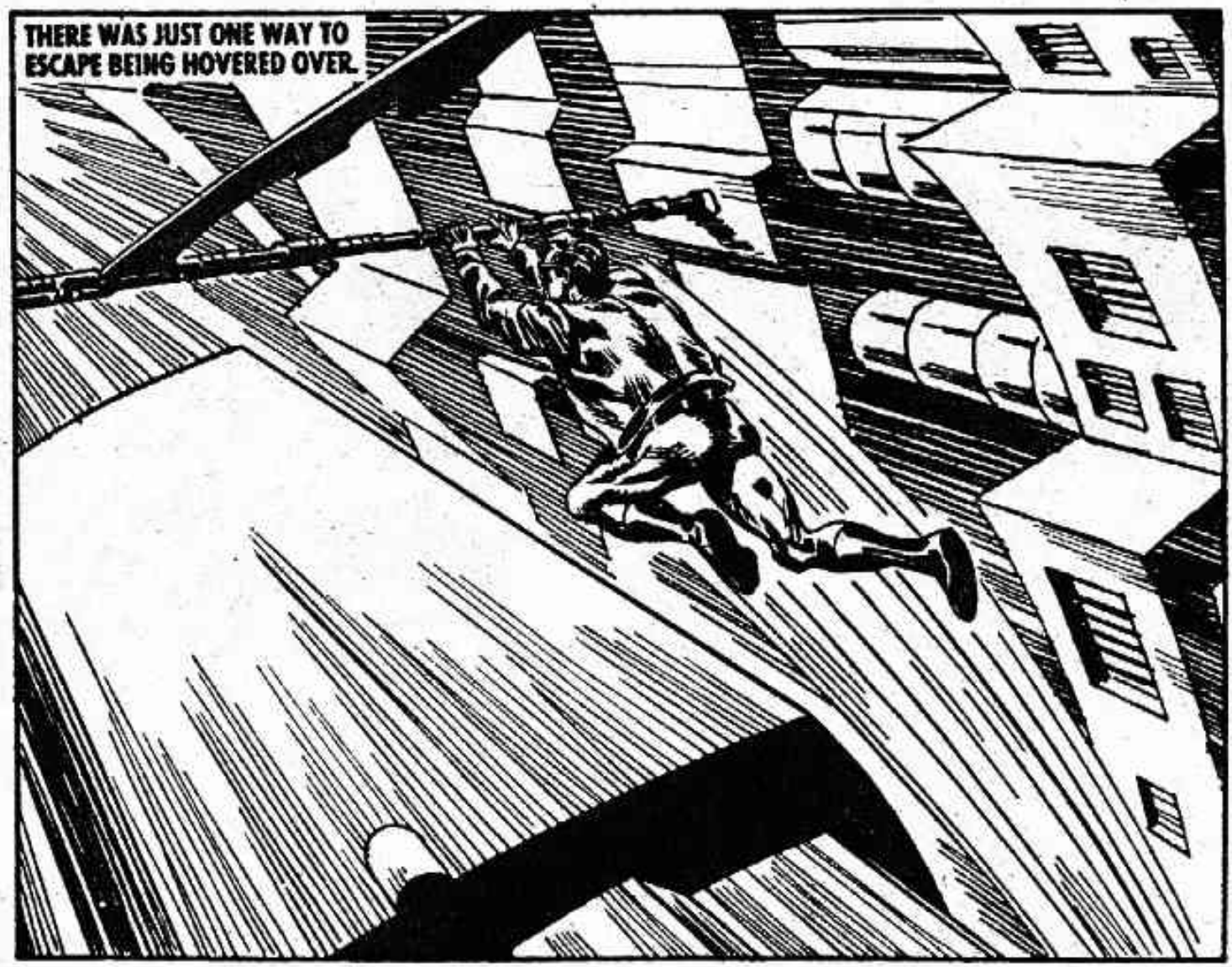
TAKE THEM!
VERY SENSIBLE!

NOT SENSIBLE — JUST CRAFTY.
SPARE CLOTHING, TOILET TACKLE, BUT — *TUT-TUT* — NO LOOT.

AT LEAST MY WORK KEEPS ME FIT.

HE'S GONE INTO THAT WAREHOUSE.

A FREIGHT-SKIP! MISTER DROON IS GETTING NASTY.


THERE WAS JUST ONE WAY TO ESCAPE BEING HOVERED OVER.

HE WASN'T ON THE SKIP — SO HE MUST BE STILL IN THE WAREHOUSE.
I MADE MY ENTRY SPEEDY — JUST IN CASE DROON HAD ANY OTHER NASTY NOTIONS.
IN GLOOMY CONDITIONS I HAVE A DEFINITE ADVANTAGE IF I TAKE OFF THE SHADES THAT CORRECT MY VISION FROM ITS INFRA-RED WAVE-LENGTH — I CAN SEE IN THE DARK.
I'M BEHIND YOU, MISTER DROON.

WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A NAP AFTER ALL THAT DASHING ABOUT.

DROON SOON REVIVED FROM MY GENTLE TAP.
ONE MILLION IN NEGOTIABLE CREDITS, PROPERTY OF T.J.K. INDUSTRIES. I WILL PROVIDE A RECEIPT FROM THEM IF YOU INSIST.
ARGH — DROP DEAD, YOU SNOOP.

MISTER DROON, BE GLAD YOU ARE NOT THE ONE DROPPING DEAD. A GIANT CORPORATION LIKE T.J.K. DOES NOT TAKE KINDLY TO THOSE WHO STEAL FROM IT.

SO FAR JUST AN ORDINARY WORKING DAY IN DOWNTOWN NEW MOSCOW.
VOTE FOR ME . . . PEACE IN OUR TIME . . .
ONLY THIS DAY I WAS IN FUNDS AND ABLE TO RETURN A FEW FAVOURS FROM MY FRIEND POP PERZ, TOYMAKER AND AGED SCIENTIFIC WHIZZ-KID.
DIDN'T YOU HAVE HAIR THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU?
YES, BUT THE CAT HAD AN ACCIDENT AND I HAD TO RECOVER IT WITH SOMETHING, CAN I HELP YOU?

I WALKED INTO A FURRY HAZARD.
AHHH!

POP, ONE OF THESE DAYS I'M GOING TO FUSE THAT ELECTRONIC MOUSER.
THAT WAS AFFECTION, KAYN. I MAY HAVE OVER-COMPENSATED IN PROGRAMMING FOR ITS PREVIOUS DISLIKE OF YOU.

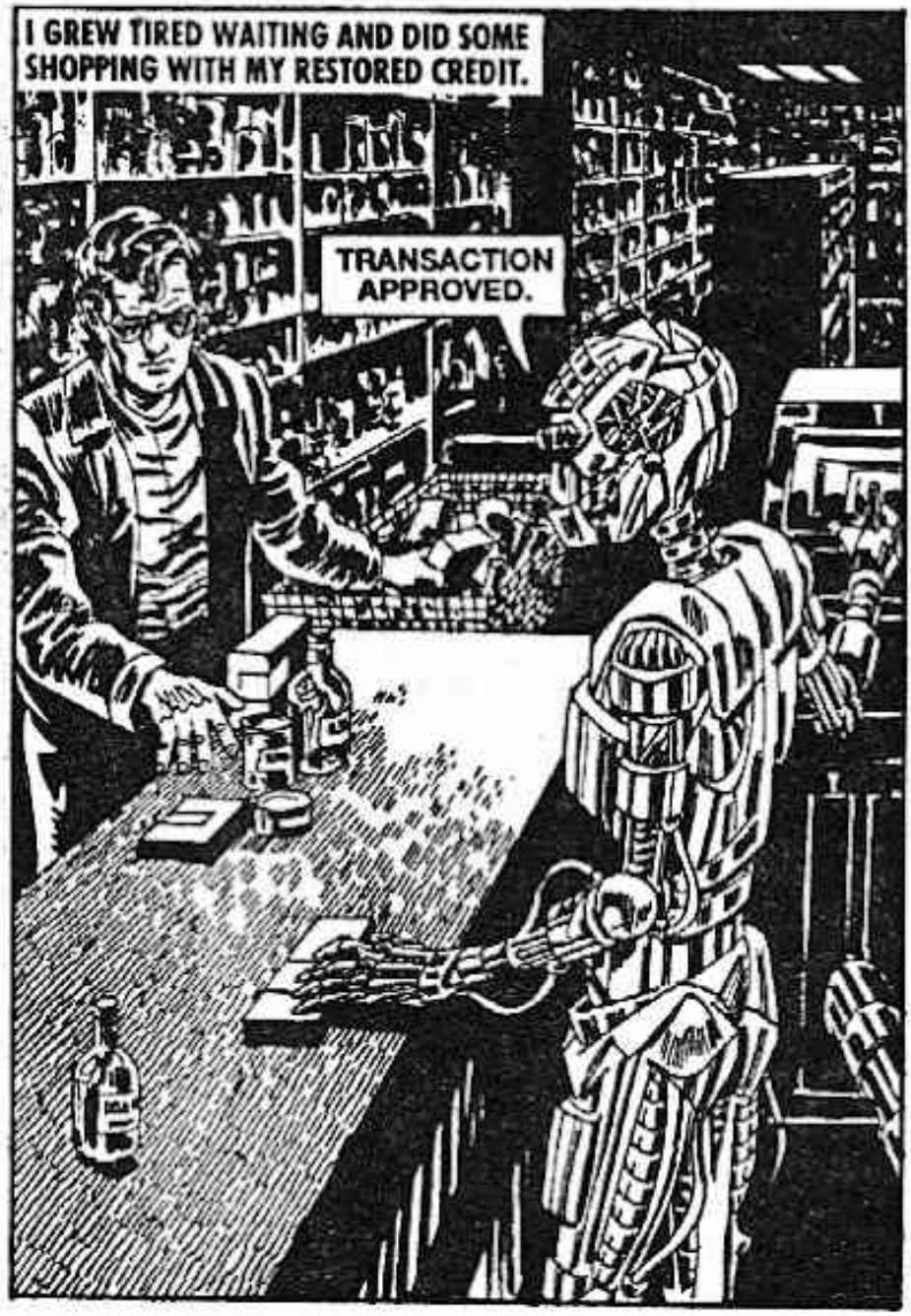
I BORROWED POP'S VIDPHONE, AND CALLED EGOL RANZ OF T.J.K. SECURITY.
STOLEN ITEMS RECOVERED AND MAILED TO THE BANK DEPOSIT CODE WITH WHICH I WAS SUPPLIED.
I HAVE BEEN SO NOTIFIED. THE AGREED FEE HAS BEEN PLACED TO THE CREDIT OF YOUR ACCOUNT.

POP, HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE A WAD OF CREDIT PLASTIC?
YOU IN FUNDS, KAYN? WAIT WHILE I BRACE MYSELF FOR THE SHOCK.

THEN IT HAPPENED — THAT CONFOUNDED MECHANICAL MOGGY!
WHAT THE . . .

THE BRUTE'S RUINED MY CALL. WAIT TILL I WIPE OUT THIS GIBBERISH.
JUST A SECOND! THAT'S NOT GIBBERISH!

POP HURRY UP — I WANT MY BUNDLE OF CREDITS.
NOT YET, KAYN. WE APPEAR TO HAVE CODED A PEEK INTO SOME SORT OF DATA PROCESSING UNIT.


I GREW TIRED WAITING AND DID SOME SHOPPING WITH MY RESTORED CREDIT.
TRANSACTION APPROVED.

POP WAS STILL HARD AT IT WHEN I GOT BACK.
HE PROBABLY WOULDN'T NOTICE IF THE ROOF FELL IN. I MAY AS WELL GET BUSY WITH THE COOKING.

KINDLY ADVISE ON NUTRITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.
JUST MAKE THIS LOT PLEASINGLY EDIBLE.

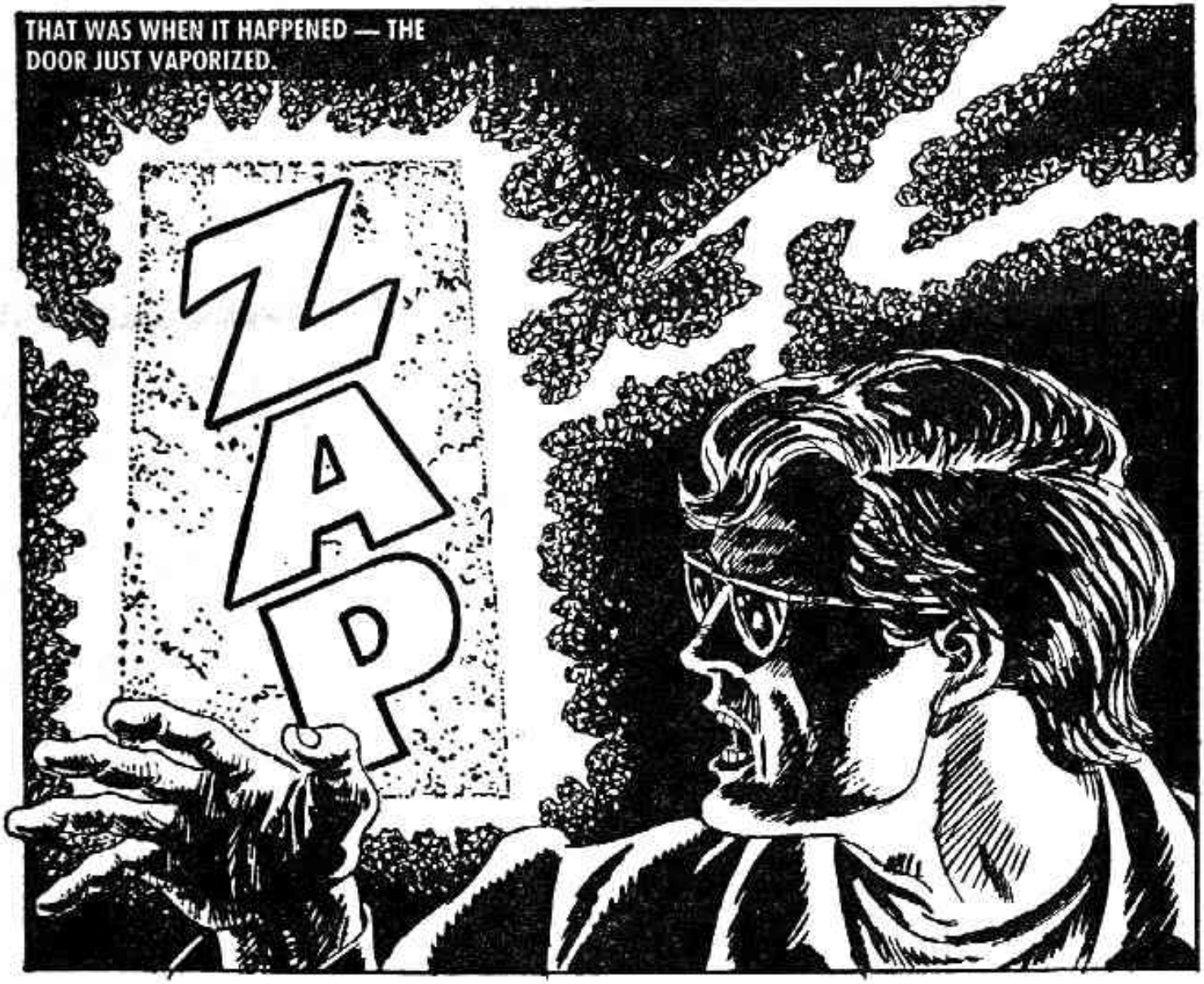
THE NUTRIENT PROCESSOR BECAME BUSY AND I WENT FOR POP.
WHA — OH, IT'S YOU, KAYN. THIS SYSTEM REALLY IS EXTREMELY WELL GUARDED. I KEEP HAVING TO FIND MY WAY PAST BARRIERS.
RIGHT NOW YOU ARE GOING TO FIND YOUR WAY TO WHERE YOU CAN RINSE THE MICROBES OFF YOUR PAWS BEFORE WE EAT.

SEE WHAT I MEAN — THOUGH SUCH SAFEGUARDS ARE TO BE EXPECTED ON A SYSTEM OF FRAUD GOING BACK MANY YEARS AND INVOLVING BILLIONS OF CREDITS.
RESTRICTED
HUH!

A THEFT OF PUBLIC FUNDS AND MATERIAL COVERED BY THE MOST DEVIOUSLY CLEVER PROGRAMMING I HAVE EVER COME ACROSS. IT IS SELF-ERASING AND ADJUSTING IN A WAY IMPOSSIBLE TO DETECT. THE CAT BREACHED A LIMBO MEMORY BANK CONTAINING FULL DETAIL.
SOUNDS FASCINATING, BUT IT'LL KEEP TILL AFTER WE'VE EATEN, POP.

POP, HOW LONG DID YOU SAY THIS CAPER HAD BEEN GOING ON?
THIRTY YEARS IS AS FAR BACK AS I HAVE CHECKED AND IT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED ALL THAT TIME.

KAYN, ONE DETAIL BOTHERS ME — A KIND OF BACKGROUND ECHO AS I SEARCHED. IT MAY BE THAT I HAVE TRIGGERED SOME FORM OF ALARM.


THAT WAS WHEN IT HAPPENED — THE DOOR JUST VAPORIZED.
ZAP

. . . AND IN CAME THIS BRACE OF CLONED GOONS.
SOURCE OF INTERFERENCE LOCATED. ONE SUBJECT PRESENT.
A JOLT FROM A STUNNER HIT ME.

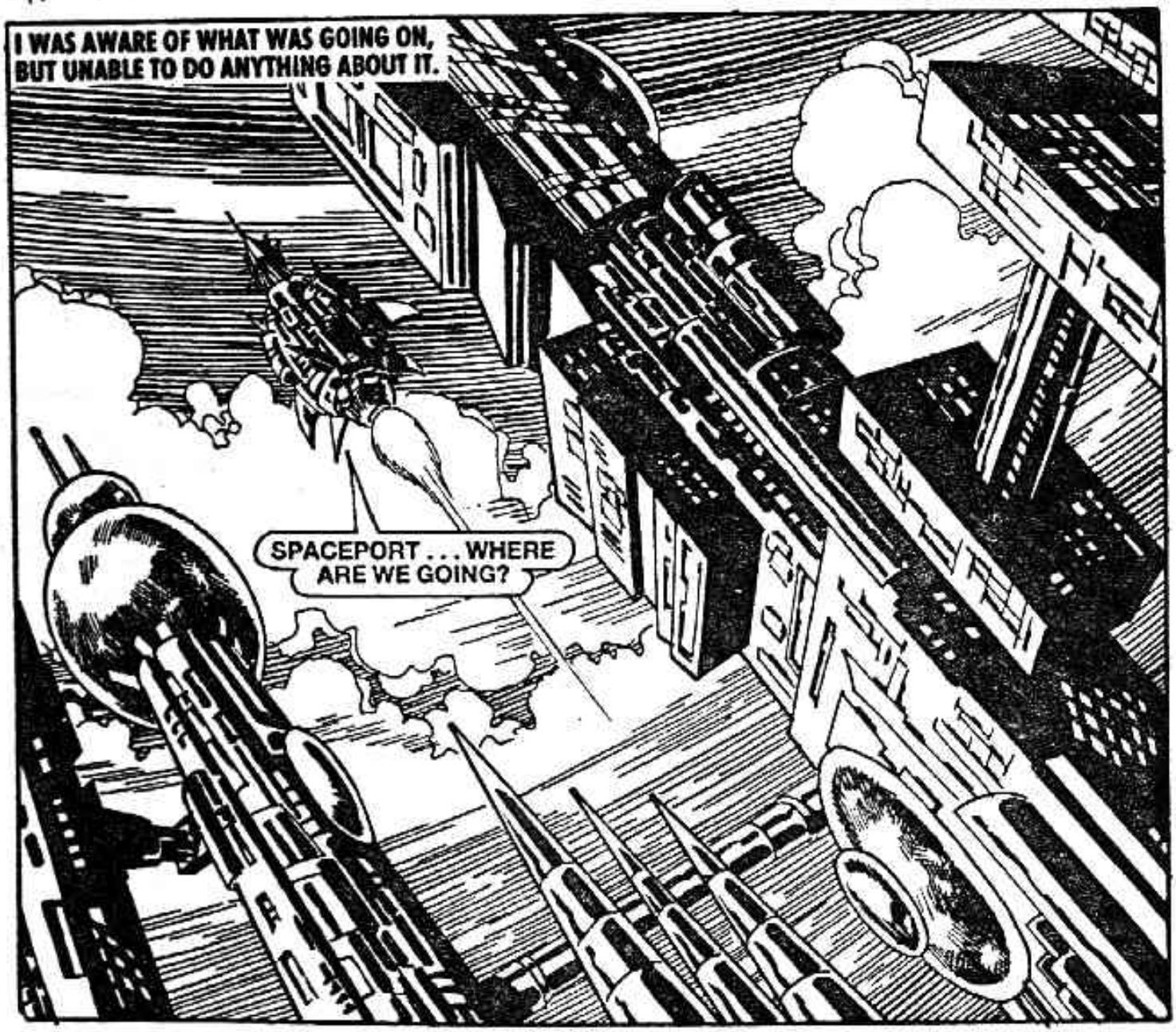
SHALL FINAL DISPOSAL BE MADE OF SUBJECT?
NEGATIVE! INTERROGATION IS NECESSARY.

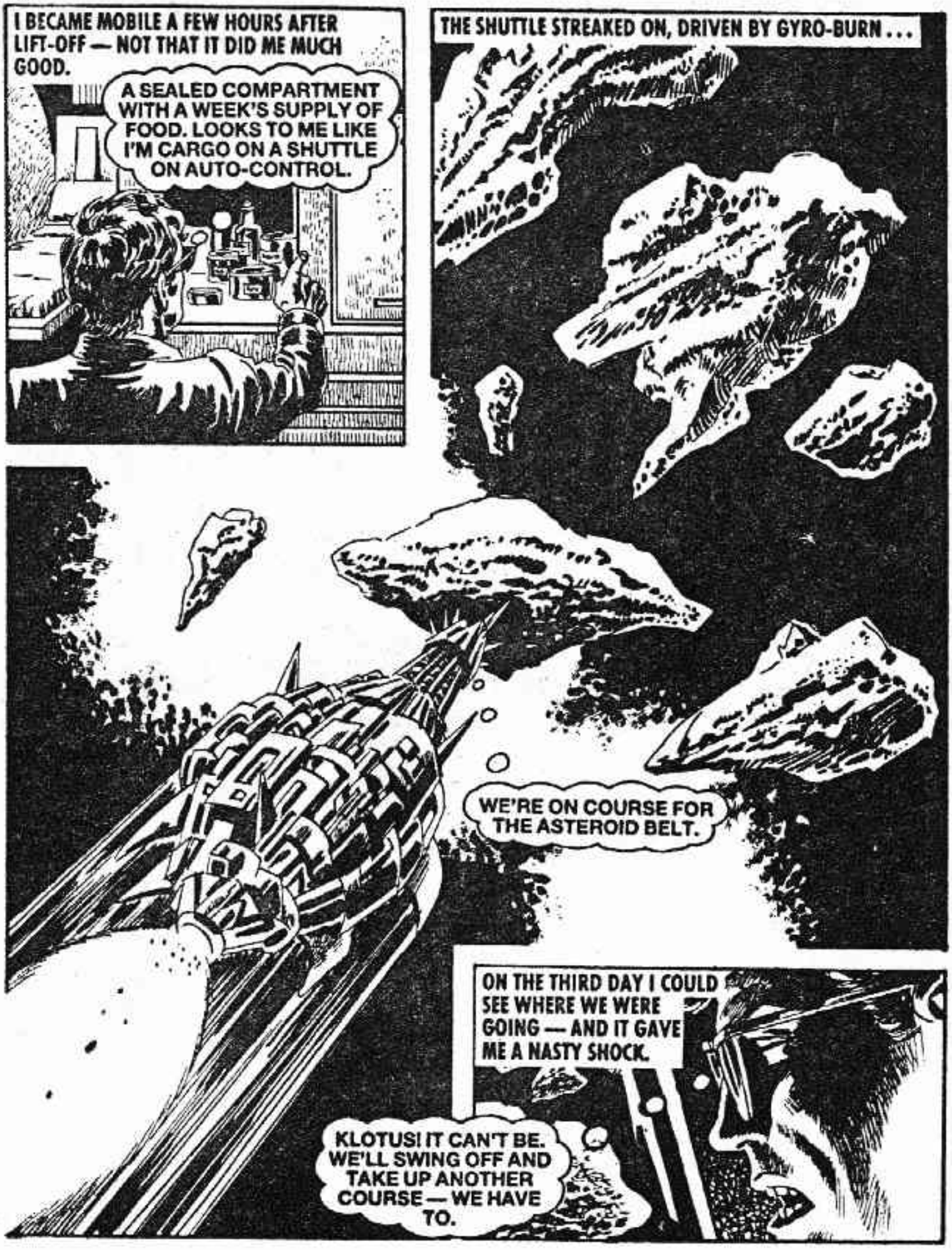
THERMITE DEVICE ACTIVATED TO DISPOSE OF ANY RECORD OF INTERFERENCE.

POP WAS SMART ENOUGH NOT TO GET INVOLVED.
I'LL CONTACT ONE OF KAYN'S OLD BUDDIES IN THE POLICE.

HOVTRUCK DONE UP LIKE A MEDCENTRE AMBULANCE. THESE GUYS ARE ORGANISED.
INSPECTOR! OUR FRIEND KAYN IS IN TROUBLE — AS AM I IF I FAIL TO DEACTIVATE THE TIMER ON THIS DEVICE LEFT TO DESTROY MY PROPERTY.

TIC TAC
TIC TAC
AH — THAT DOES IT. NOW INSPECTOR, AS I WAS SAYING . . .
I'M GOING . . . JUST IN CASE!


I WAS AWARE OF WHAT WAS GOING ON, BUT UNABLE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
SPACEPORT . . . WHERE ARE WE GOING?


I BECAME MOBILE A FEW HOURS AFTER LIFT-OFF — NOT THAT IT DID ME MUCH GOOD.
A SEALED COMPARTMENT WITH A WEEK'S SUPPLY OF FOOD. LOOKS TO ME LIKE I'M CARGO ON A SHUTTLE ON AUTO-CONTROL.
THE SHUTTLE STREAKED ON, DRIVEN BY GYRO-BURN . . .
WE'RE ON COURSE FOR THE ASTEROID BELT.
ON THE THIRD DAY I COULD SEE WHERE WE WERE GOING — AND IT GAVE ME A NASTY SHOCK.
KLOTUS! IT CAN'T BE. WE'LL SWING OFF AND TAKE UP ANOTHER COURSE — WE HAVE TO.

I THOUGHT BACK TO LECTURES IN MY CADET DAYS.
GENTLEMEN, THIS IS KLOTUS, ONCE A BASE FOR MINING OPERATIONS UNTIL A THERMO-NUCLEAR EXPLOSION TURNED IT INTO A VERY HOT ROCK.

WE'RE GOING STRAIGHT FOR IT.

WELL INSIDE THE RADIATION CLOUD. I'M AS GOOD AS DEAD RIGHT NOW.
WE'RE DROPPING INTO THAT CRATER. MUST BE UNDER GROUND CONTROL.

I AWOKE IN A DIFFERENT PLACE.

YOU ARE A MIKAL R. KAYN ACCORDING TO YOUR IDENTITY CARD. I NEED ANSWERS TO SOME QUESTIONS, MR KAYN.

I ASSURE YOU THIS WILL NOT HURT.
QUESTIONS! OH, NO — MUSTN'T ANSWER.

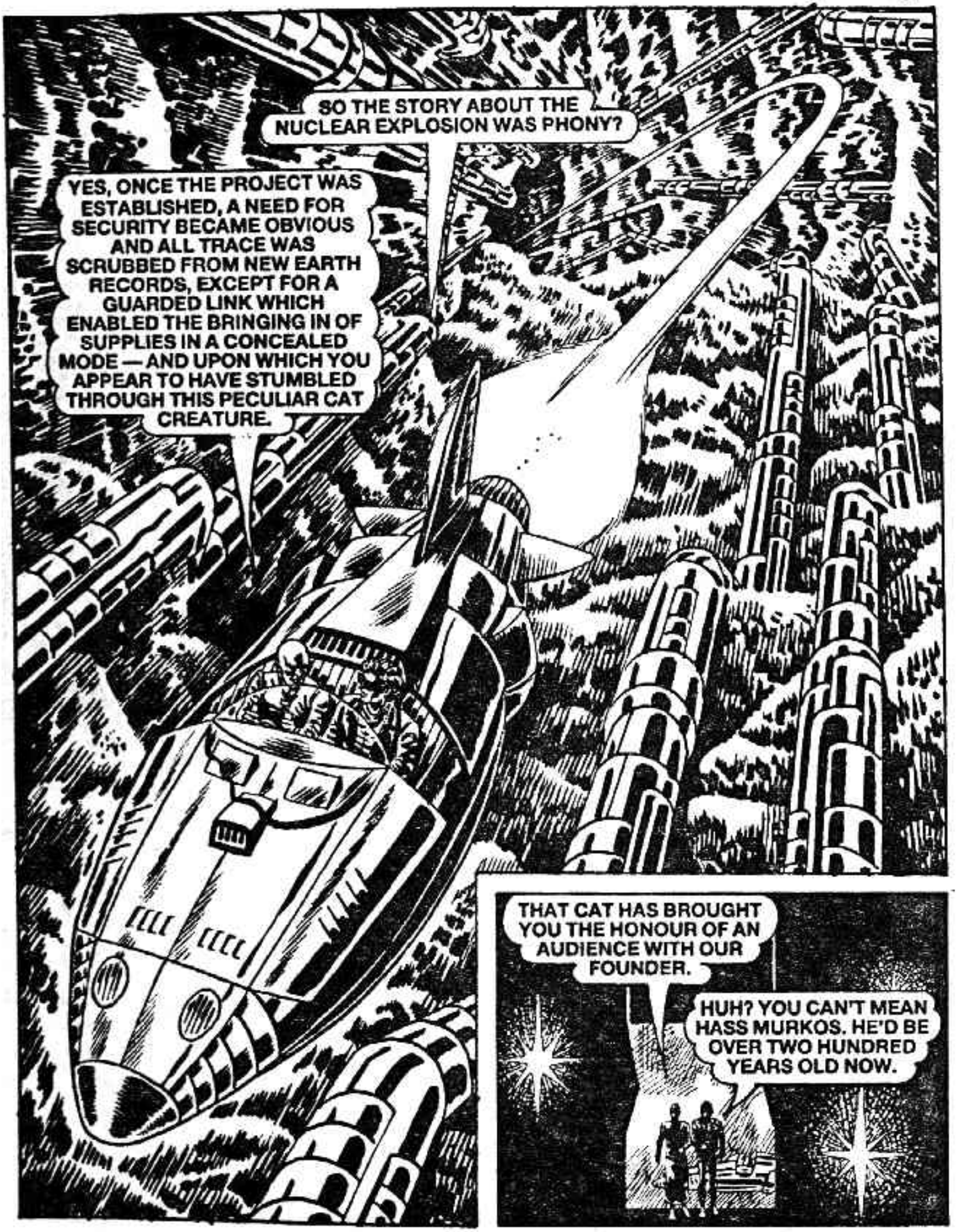
ALL AT ONCE I WANTED TO BE FRIENDLY AND TELL HIM ALL HE WANTED TO KNOW — BUT SOMETHING STOPPED ME TELLING ABOUT POP PERZ.
WHO ELSE KNOWS WHAT YOU KNOW OF THE COMPUTER PROGRAMME, MISTER KAYN?
NOBODY! NOBODY! JUST ME. THAT CAT TRIGGERED OFF THE ENTRY CODE. I JUST FOLLOWED UP.

THE BEAM WAS TURNED OFF AND I STOPPED FEELING FRIENDLY.

KAYN, I WILL ADVISE YOU THAT I AM PARTLY BIONIC AND ABLE TO DEAL WITH ANY VIOLENT REACTION.

SHOW ME!

I SWUNG — AND HE SHOWED ME.
I'M CONVINCED — AHH! WHAT IN ABERRATION IS THIS PLACE?
YOU MAY BE INFORMED SINCE THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF YOUR PASSING ON WHAT YOU LEARN.
KLOTUS WAS THE BASE FOR THE MURKOS PROJECT SET UP TWO HUNDRED YEARS BACK UNDER THE DIRECTION OF HASS MURKOS. HE DISCOVERED A-I OR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE — GENUINE A-I, NOT THE RESTRICTED FORM USED IN ROBOTS.


SO THE STORY ABOUT THE NUCLEAR EXPLOSION WAS PHONY?
YES, ONCE THE PROJECT WAS ESTABLISHED, A NEED FOR SECURITY BECAME OBVIOUS AND ALL TRACE WAS SCRUBBED FROM NEW EARTH RECORDS, EXCEPT FOR A GUARDED LINK WHICH ENABLED THE BRINGING IN OF SUPPLIES IN A CONCEALED MODE — AND UPON WHICH YOU APPEAR TO HAVE STUMBLED THROUGH THIS PECULIAR CAT CREATURE.
THAT CAT HAS BROUGHT YOU THE HONOUR OF AN AUDIENCE WITH OUR FOUNDER.
HUH? YOU CAN'T MEAN HASS MURKOS. HE'D BE OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS OLD NOW.

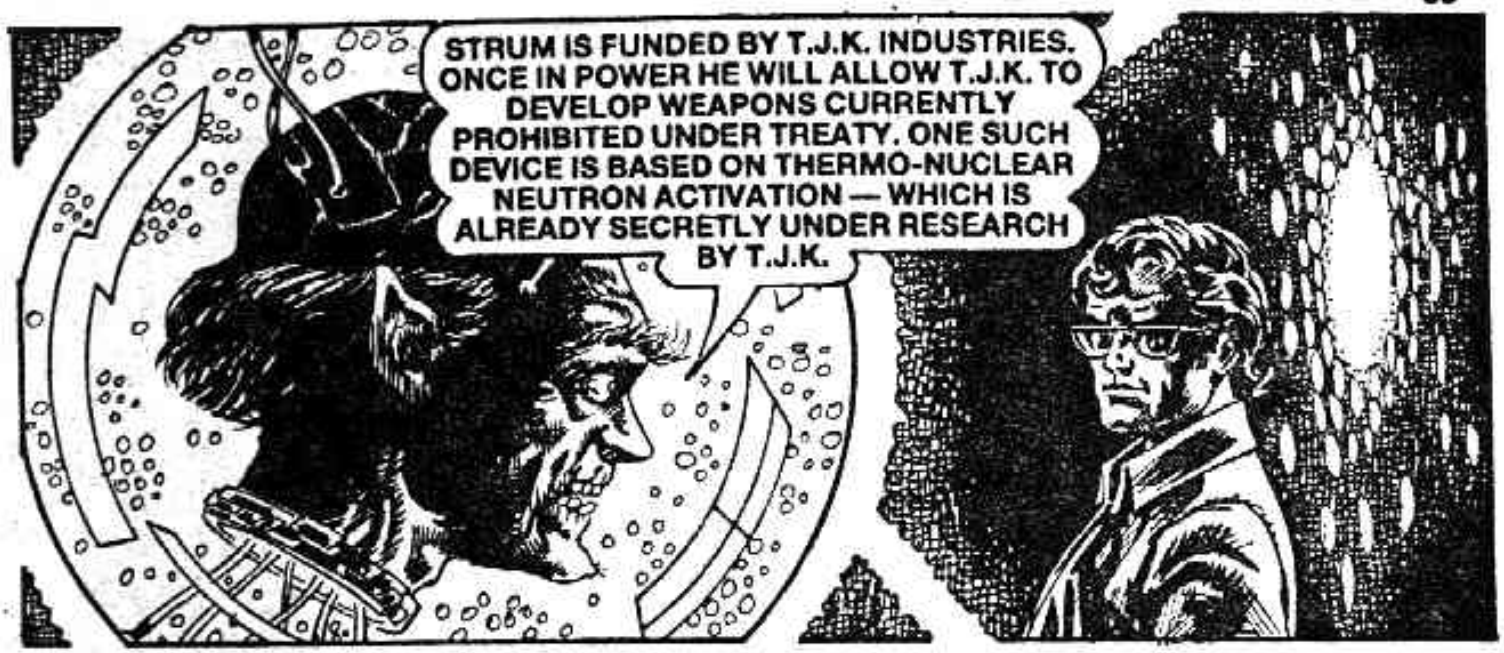
ANOTHER VOICE JOINED IN.
ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS DEAD, KAYN — CLINICALLY SPEAKING, THAT IS. VARIOUS PROBLEMS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PERSUADED ME TO DONATE MY OWN BRAIN AS THE CENTRAL UNIT OF A NEURISTOR MASS OF MEMORY AND THOUGHT FUNCTION WHICH NOW FILLS MANY OF THE OLD MINE-SHAFTS OF THIS ASTEROID.

THE LATE (AND PRESENT) HASS MURKOS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT POP'S ELECTRONIC MOGGY — SO I TOLD HIM.
UNDIRECTED PAW MOTIONS CONCEIVABLE AS A FACTOR SO RANDOM AS TO BE IMPOSSIBLE TO COMPUTE.
INDEED SO, FOUNDER. DETERMINING THE END OF NEW EARTH IS BY COMPARISON A SIMPLE PROGNOSTICATION.
THE END OF NEW EARTH, EH? I SUPPOSE YOU'VE WORKED IT OUT TO WITHIN A FEW MILLION YEARS.
MORE PRECISELY THAN THAT, KAYN. THE PLANET WILL BECOME DEVOID OF BIOLOGICAL LIFE WITHIN FROM ONE TO ONE AND A HALF STANDARD YEARS. NOW YOU MAY LEAVE ME — THE AUDIENCE IS ENDED.
HE WASN'T GETTING RID OF ME LIKE THAT — NOT AFTER WHAT I'D JUST HEARD.
OH, NO! THAT GLOBULAR BUNDLE OF TISSUE SAYS MY WORLD IS ABOUT TO END. I WANT TO KNOW WHAT HE MEANS.

I WANT TO KNOW!

DO NOT BE DIFFICULT, KAYN.
WAIT! KAYN MAY LACK PROPER SCIENTIFIC CURIOSITY, BUT HIS INTEREST IS NATURAL. NEW EARTH IS DOOMED BECAUSE OF EVENTS NOW SET IN MOTION . . .

YES, MY FRIENDS, I PROMISE YOU A FAIR DEAL.
THAT PERSON, A CERTAIN BIRT STRUM, WILL BECOME PREFECT OF THE COUNCIL — IN EFFECT, THE RULER OF NEW EARTH.


STRUM IS FUNDED BY T.J.K. INDUSTRIES. ONCE IN POWER HE WILL ALLOW T.J.K. TO DEVELOP WEAPONS CURRENTLY PROHIBITED UNDER TREATY. ONE SUCH DEVICE IS BASED ON THERMO-NUCLEAR NEUTRON ACTIVATION — WHICH IS ALREADY SECRETLY UNDER RESEARCH BY T.J.K.

RAN WARBEL, A SCIENTIST OF SOMEWHAT ERRATIC BRILLIANCE, IS DESIGNING A BEAM CARRYING A STREAM OF SUB-ATOMIC PARTICLES TO A TARGET ON WHICH THEY UNLEASH A NEUTRON EXPLOSION CAPABLE OF DESTROYING BIOLOGICAL MATTER. UNFORTUNATELY WARBEL'S CONJECTURE IS BASED ON FAULTY MATHEMATICS.

OBSERVE THE FLAW IN HIS EQUATION. QUITE OBVIOUS, IS IT NOT? HIS BEAM, AT THE FIRST TESTING, WILL WIPE ALL LIFE FROM NEW EARTH.
MY SURROUNDINGS SUDDENLY HAZED OVER.
PERHAPS YOU ARE INTERESTED IN A PROJECTION OF THE FUTURE!

THE HAZE CLEARED — AND I HAD A SHOCK.
NEW MOSCOW! I'M BACK HOME, BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN THE PLACE LIKE THIS — SO EMPTY, SO QUIET.

CLANG!
CLANG!
PHEW — THAT'S BETTER. I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK I WAS ALL ALONE IN THE CITY.

THE BREEZE SWINGING A SIGN! I AM ALONE!
THE SPORT SHOP
CLANG!
CLANG!

THE HAZE SETTLED AGAIN — THEN WAS GONE.
I TRUST YOU FOUND THAT OF INTEREST. HOWEVER, IT MAY NOT HAPPEN. THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF ONE IN FIVE BILLION OF MY FORECAST NOT COMING TO PASS.
NOT GOOD ODDS — BUT I'LL TAKE THEM. LET ME GO BACK — MAYBE I CAN DO SOMETHING.

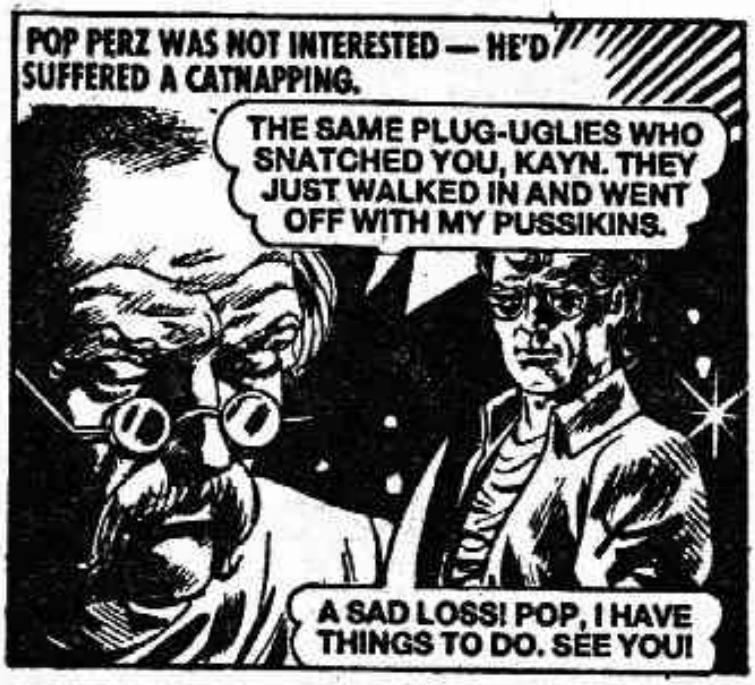
COME, KAYN. YOU WILL BE RETURNED TO YOUR HOME.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT WAS USED ON ME, BUT IT WAS LIKE DROPPING INTO A BLACK PIT, THAT VOICE ECHOING ROUND ME.
YOU MAY GO. YOU MAY SUCCEED AND LIVE — OR TERMINATE WITH OTHER LIFE ON THE PLANET.

I CAME ROUND IN THE SEALED COMPARTMENT ON THE SHUTTLE.
WAS IT ALL A DREAM? AM I STILL DREAMING? I DON'T KNOW, BUT WE'RE ON COURSE FOR NEW EARTH.
THREE DAYS LATER CAME ATMOSPHERIC ENTRY TO NEW MOSCOW SPACEDROME.
HOME AGAIN . . . WHAT NOW?

THE COMPARTMENT OPENED UP — AND I WAS HOME.

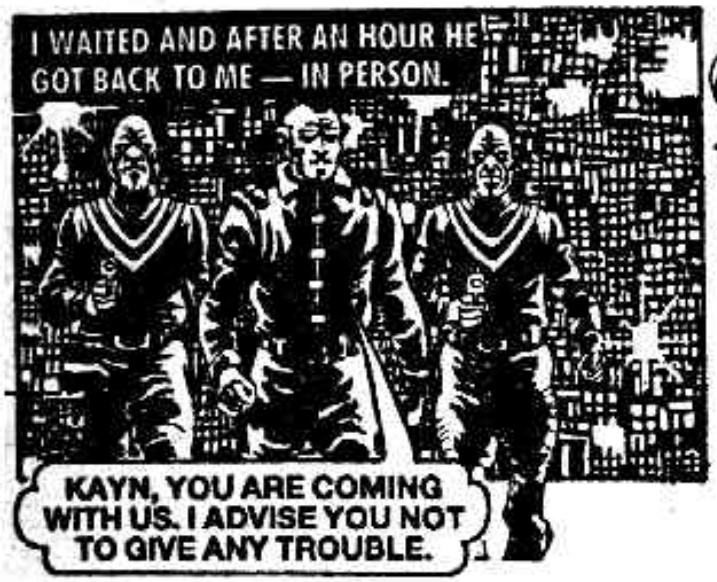
I HAVE TO STOP STRUM . . . MAYBE KILLING HIM IS THE ONLY WAY. BUT I'M NO KILLER.



I LOOKED FOR A PUBLIC VIDFONE FAR FROM POP'S PLACE.

IT'S KAYN, MISTER RANZ. A WEEK AGO YOU PAID ME OFF FOR A JOB I DID FOR T.J.K. INDUSTRIES. YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THE WARBEL BEAM.

WAIT WHERE YOU ARE WHILE I RUN A CHECK.



WE QUIT THE CITY AND CRUISED THROUGH THE ROUGHLANDS TILL . . .

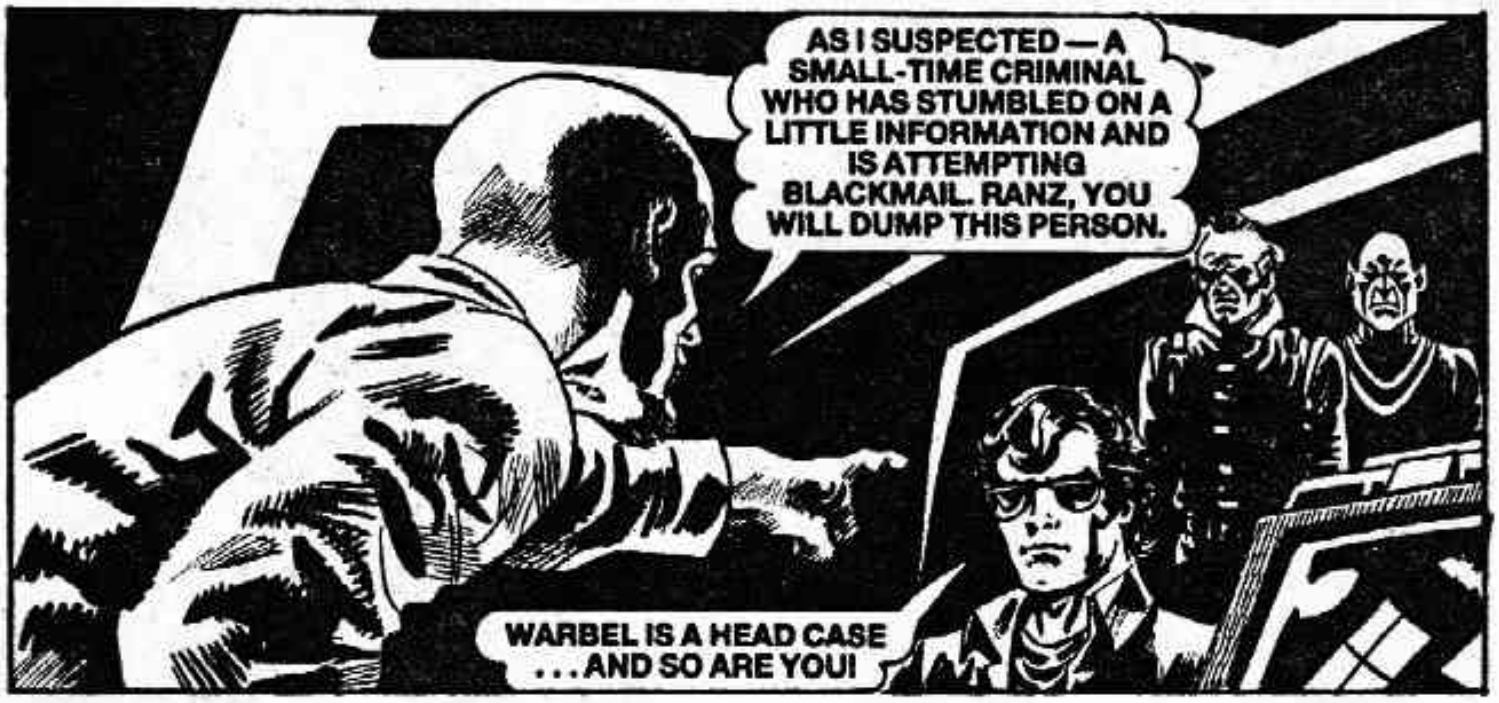
MAIN BASE OF T.J.K! WE'RE GOING FOR A COSY CHAT IN THE OFFICE, EH, MISTER RANZ!

SOMETHING LIKE THAT, KAYN. FACT IS, YOU ARE BEING HONOURED.

I KNEW WHAT HE MEANT WHEN I SAW WHO AWAITED ME — C. B. JAYGAN, THE 'J' IN T.J.K.
KAYN, YOU CLAIM TO KNOW ABOUT SOMETHING YOU CALL THE WARBEL BEAM.
I KNOW IT WILL DESTROY ALL LIFE ON NEW EARTH IF EVER IT'S USED.

ANY COMMENTS, DOCTOR WARBEL?
THE MAN IS TALKING NONSENSE. I CHALLENGE HIM TO PRODUCE PROOF OF HIS WILD CLAIM.

MY COP-TRAINED MEMORY HELPED ME TAP OUT THE EQUATION SHOWN BY THE LATE HASS MURKOS.
AN INTERESTING VARIATION, BUT OF NO RELEVANCE TO THE MAIN THEORY. MISTER JAYGAN, MY PARTICLE BEAM IS COMPLETELY SAFE.
THANK YOU, DOCTOR WARBEL. THAT WILL BE ALL.


AS I SUSPECTED — A SMALL-TIME CRIMINAL WHO HAS STUMBLED ON A LITTLE INFORMATION AND IS ATTEMPTING BLACKMAIL. RANZ, YOU WILL DUMP THIS PERSON.
WARBEL IS A HEAD CASE ...AND SO ARE YOU!

MY ESCORTS TOOK ME DOWN AN ANTI-GRAV SHAFT TO A VEHICLE COMPOUND.
I DON'T LIKE THE SOUND OF THIS DUMPING.
WE'LL MAKE IT PAINLESS AND QUICK.

I AM NOT, BY NATURE, A VIOLENT MAN, BUT I TEND TO BECOME TEMPERAMENTAL WHEN MY LIFE IS THREATENED —
EURGH!
I DON'T THINK I'LL WAIT AROUND FOR IT.
HEY — WHAT THE —
ONE DOWN — ONE TO GO.

. . . AND GONE.
URRRRRRF!

A QUITE GENTLE DISPOSAL, BUT NOT A BIT OF GRATITUDE FROM THAT PAIR.
YOU'RE DEAD, KAYN — DEAD. NOBODY GETS AWAY WITH CROSSING T.J.K.
NAH! NOBODY GETS AWAY WITH THAT.

I MADE A FAST SWING OFF THE HOVPAD.
AUTOSECURITY TO VEHICLE APPROACHING PORTAL 11. KINDLY KEY YOUR SECURITY CODE.
A CODE-SIGN NEEDED TO GET OUT, EH! THEY'RE A SUSPICIOUS LOT IN T.J.K.

I WENT OUT THE HARD WAY.

SO JAYGAN REFUSES TO LISTEN TO REASON! SO WHAT COMES NEXT?
WHAT CAME WAS NOISY.
K-A-Z-A-P!
THAT WAS A WARNING, KAYN. PULL UP OR THE NEXT ONE SPLATTERS YOU.

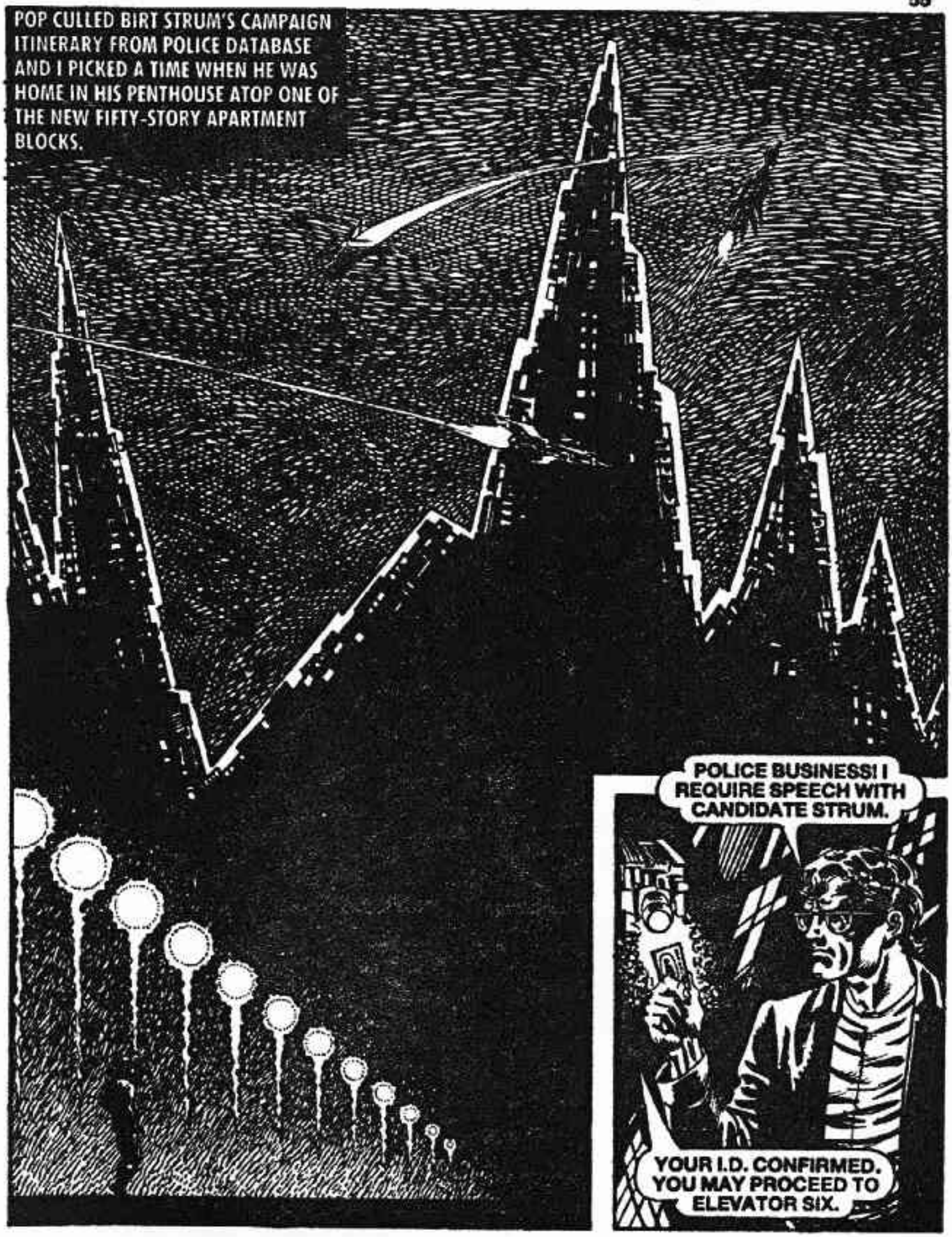
I TOOK A LEFT . . .
BAD MOVE, KAYN.

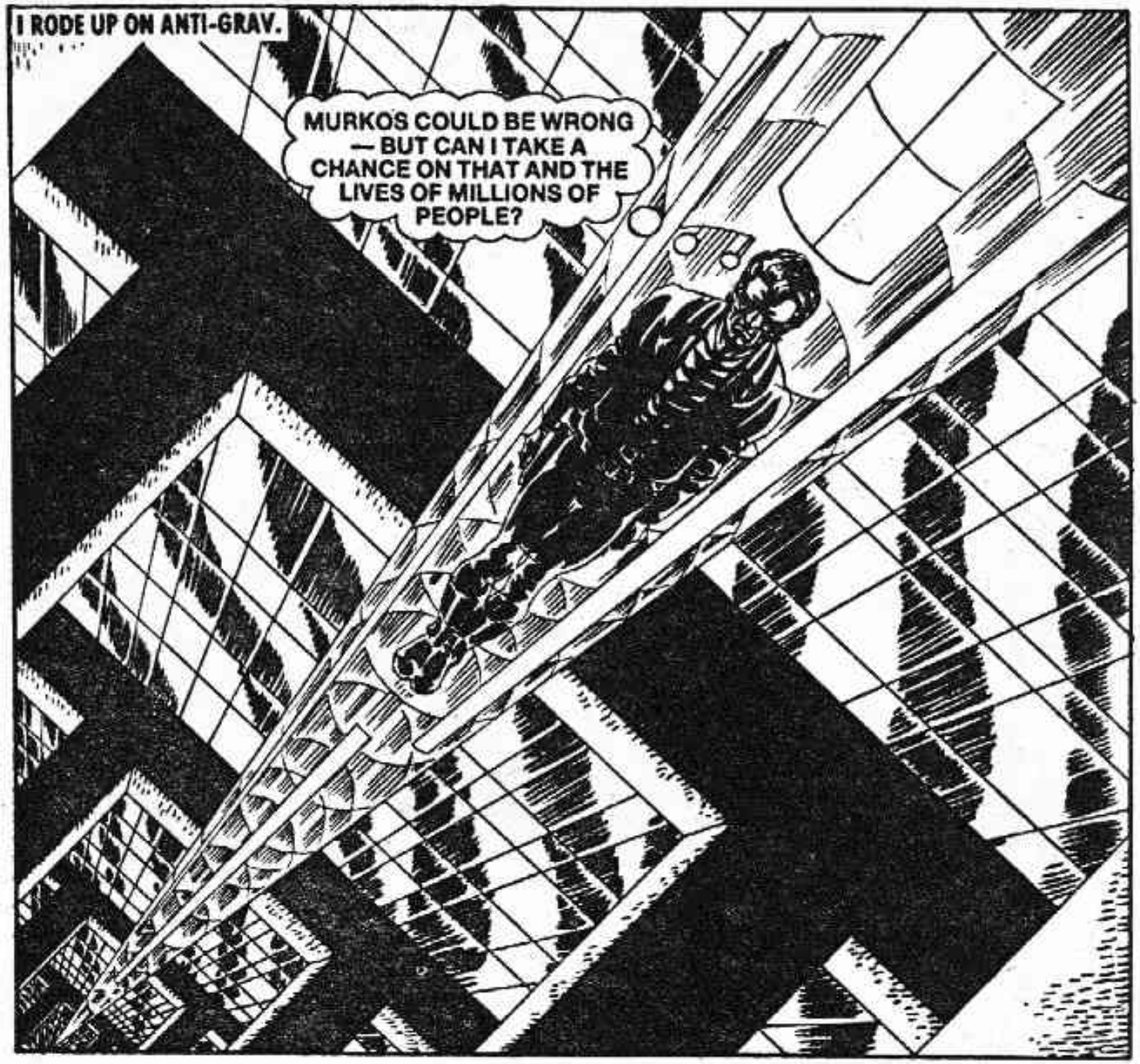
I CLOSED THE CHANNEL, SET THE CONTROLS ON AUTO — AND TOOK A DIVE.
YOU'VE ASKED FOR IT — AND YOU'RE GOING . . .
SOUNDS AS IF RANZ HAS DECIDED TO WRITE OFF THIS BUGGY.

HELP!
JUST IN TIME.

THAT BUYS ME A FEW HOURS BEFORE RANZ KNOWS THE REMAINS OF MIKAL R. KAYN ARE NOT A FRICASSEE IN CHARRED DEBRIS.
I HIKED TO THE THRUWAY AND HITCHED A LIFT.
I SAY AGAIN, DEAR FRIENDS, A VOTE FOR BIRT STRUM IS A DOWN-PAYMENT ON BETTER LAW ENFORCEMENT —
NOW I KNOW HOW TO USE THAT TIME.

I CALLED FROM POP'S PLACE.
YES, KAYN, A REPORT IS IN ABOUT A HOVERCAR SMASH-UP BUT YOUR NAME IS NOT MENTIONED.
JUST CHECKING! THANKS, FRIEND.
IT'S DONE, KAYN. I HACKED INTO POLICE RECORDS FROM YOUR CLEAR LINE.
GOOD WORK, POP. I WANT MY OLD SERVICE IDENTITY REINSTATED AND THEN I NEED SOME INFORMATION.
YOUR OLD HANDGUN, EH? KAYN, THAT IS AN ILLEGAL WEAPON FOR ANYONE EXCEPT A SERVING COP.
POP, WHAT I MIGHT HAVE TO DO WITH IT IS EVEN MORE ILLEGAL.


POP CULLED BIRT STRUM'S CAMPAIGN ITINERARY FROM POLICE DATABASE AND I PICKED A TIME WHEN HE WAS HOME IN HIS PENTHOUSE ATOP ONE OF THE NEW FIFTY-STORY APARTMENT BLOCKS.
POLICE BUSINESS! I REQUIRE SPEECH WITH CANDIDATE STRUM.
YOUR I.D. CONFIRMED. YOU MAY PROCEED TO ELEVATOR SIX.


I RODE UP ON ANTI-GRAV.
MURKOS COULD BE WRONG — BUT CAN I TAKE A CHANCE ON THAT AND THE LIVES OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE?

HI THERE, OFFICER KAYN. YOU'LL FIND ME IN THE CHAMBER AT THE END OF THE PASSAGE.
IT'S HIM — THE VOICE FROM THE HOLOGRAM BROADCASTS IN THE CITY.

I MOVED ON AND SAW HIM — BIRT STRUM IN PERSON.
HONESTY AND FAIR-DEALING, FOLKS! YES, THAT'S MY STYLE.
OR WAS IT?
ANOTHER HOLOGRAM.
I'M OVER HERE, OFFICER. FOOLED YOU, EH? MY BROADCASTS ARE AUTOSET ON DISC, BUT I CAN CONTROL THEM FROM HERE.
IT'S YOUR BROADCASTS I AM HERE ABOUT, SIR.

HANDS OFF THOSE CONTROLS. FIRST A REHEARSAL. YOU ARE GOING TO ANNOUNCE YOUR WITHDRAWAL FROM THE CANDIDACY.

ARE YOU MAD — AH NO, NOW I UNDERSTAND. YOU ARE IN THE PAY OF ONE OF MY RIVALS. WELL, YOU DO NOT SCARE ME.

WHICH IS WHEN WE WERE INTERRUPTED.
WE KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE, KAYN. MY OFFICE GETS A FEED-OFF FROM STRUM'S SECURITY SYSTEM.
RANZ — THE T.J.K. HATCHETMAN!

THEY CAME IN.
KAYN, THESE STUNNERS ARE ON KILL-POWER. YOU MAY GET ONE OF US WITH THAT OLD BLASTER, BUT WE'LL CERTAINLY GET YOU.
RANZ, YOU CAN'T BE SEEING WHERE I'M AIMING — RIGHT AT THE HEAD OF CANDIDATE STRUM.

BOSS, WE GOT A PROBLEM.
I HEARD! PATCH ME THROUGH TO THE MAIN SCREEN.

C. B. JAYGAN CAME ON.
KAYN, THERE WILL BE NO HAGGLING. JUST NAME YOUR PRICE. TOO MUCH IS INVESTED IN BIRT STRUM FOR US TO RISK LOSING HIM.

I DID SOME FURTIVE BUTTON-PUSHING.
JAYGAN,ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT T.J.K. INDUSTRIES OWNS BIRT STRUM?
YES, KAYN. A DUMB YOUNG LAWYER CONDITIONED INTO A COMPUTER IMAGE OF THE PERFECT CANDIDATE — AND NEXT WEEK A LANDSLIDE MAJORITY WILL MAKE HIM PREFECT OF THE COUNCIL. OUR PREFECT, THE PROPERTY OF T.J.K. INDUSTRIES.

SOUNDS TO ME LIKE CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY.
ONLY IF WE ARE FOUND OUT, KAYN. OTHERWISE IT IS JUST GOOD BUSINESS.
WHY NOT COME IN WITH US, KAYN? T.J.K. CAN FIND A PLACE FOR A SMART, TOUGH FELLOW LIKE YOU.
INSPECTOR!
HUSH! THIS IS REAL INTERESTING.
IT'S GOING OUT LIVE. MISTER JAYGAN, HE'S GOT YOU ON MY BROADCAST NET.
WHAT? THE SNEAKY — BOYS, GET HIM.

I HIT THE LIGHTING WITH A SNAPSHOT.
DARKNESS IS WHERE MY INFRA-RED VISION COMES IN USEFUL.
HELP ME! HELP ME!
STRUM, SHUT UP.

I SEE HIM, RANZ.
ARGH — IT'S ME, YOU FOOL — ARGH!

RANZ! WAS THAT YOU — URH!

I HAD TIDIED UP WHEN MARTY ARRIVED WITH A SQUAD OF THE LAW.

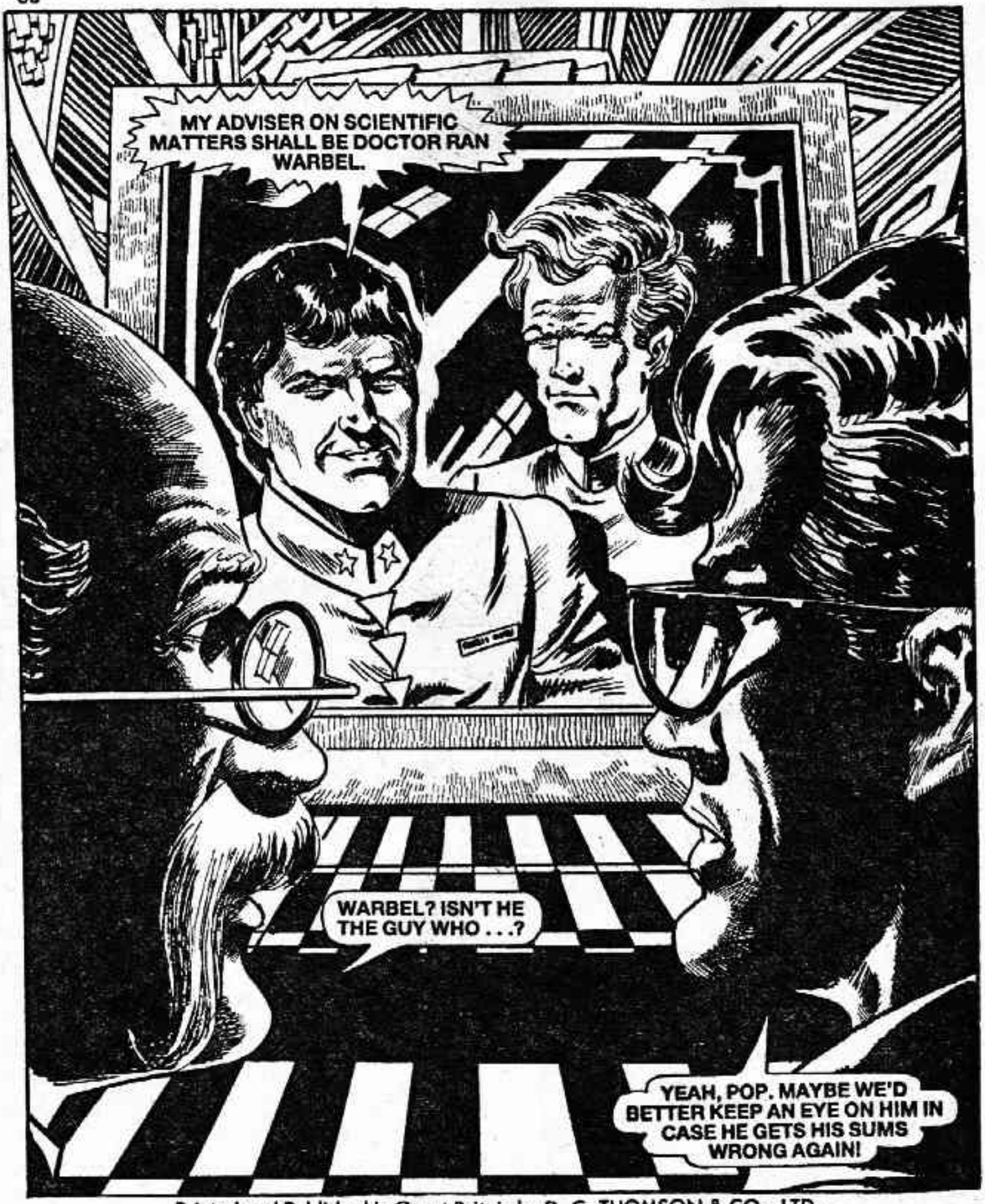
KAYN, YOU HAVE A LOT OF EXPLAINING TO DO.

JAYGAN DID A VANISHING TRICK, T.J.K. INDUSTRIES WAS CLOSED DOWN, BIRT STRUM WITHDREW HIS CANDIDACY AND POP GOT HIS CAT BACK —

THOSE TWO GOONS BROUGHT HIM BACK, SAID SOMETHING ABOUT HIM BEING A RANDOM FACTOR THEN LEFT.

LOOK! THE NEW PREFECT.

MY FRIENDS, THE COUNCIL IS COMPLETE AND I AM HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE ONE SPECIAL APPOINTMENT TO IT.



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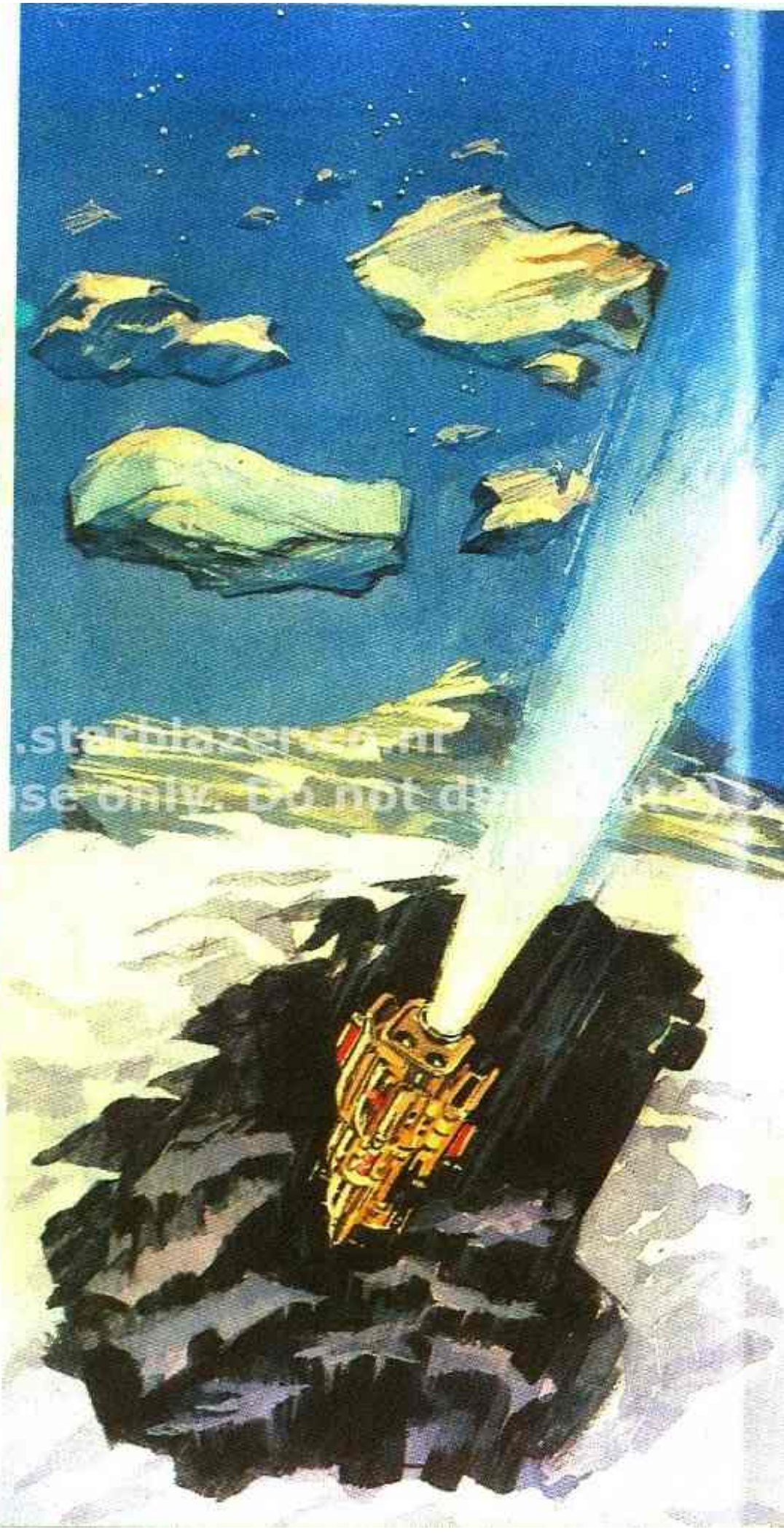
DON'T MISS

THIS MONTH'S OTHER ACTION-PACKED ADVENTURE

NOW ON SALE

HEAD CASE

It was that blasted cat that started it . . . Pop Perz's mechanical moggy that seemed to have taken a dislike to me. Anyway, it did a fandango on Pop's computer keyboard and hey, presto! . . . we're in big trouble. The interfering feline had managed to breach Earth Government security . . . and that's where my troubles really started.

By the way, I'm Kayn . . . Mikal R. Kayn, private investigator, poor, hungry and desperate for work — any work, but the stuff I get!